



# COLUMBIA SHUSWAP REGIONAL DISTRICT



## OVERVIEW

This *Overview* explains the new building inspection service that is being introduced throughout Electoral Areas B and E, and expanded to include all of Electoral Area F, in the Columbia-Shuswap

Regional District (CSR D). This *Overview* explains what the service is, why it is being introduced, how it will be implemented, and what it will cost.

## WHAT IS A BUILDING INSPECTION SERVICE?

Building inspection services are established by local governments to ensure that new construction complies with the requirements of the *BC Building Code*, and the regulations set out in key community planning documents, such as a Zoning Bylaw and Official Community Plan.

Building inspection is most easily understood in the context of the broader land development process. In British Columbia, governments at both the provincial and local levels have important roles to play in creating and enforcing the rules that govern this process. The provincial



government is responsible for creating the *BC Building Code*, a technical document that sets out the requirements and standards for the construction, alteration, repair and demolition of all types of buildings.



Local governments — including regional districts — regulate development using both land use and building bylaws. On the land use side, municipalities and regional districts create Zoning Bylaws and Official Community Plans that set out their communities' long-term goals, and that guide development in ways that support the goals. On the construction side, local governments adopt building regulation bylaws to apply and enforce the rules and standards of the *BC Building Code*, and detail the building inspection approval process. Property owners who wish to construct buildings in a jurisdiction covered by a building regulation bylaw must apply for and obtain a building permit before construction can start. A building inspection service is the service through which applications for building permits are reviewed for compliance with the *BC Building Code*, Zoning Bylaws and Official Community Plans.

## HOW DO BUILDING INSPECTIONS PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY?

Buildings are complex, particularly when they include plumbing, electrical wiring, and connections to drinking water and septic systems. The *BC Building Code* establishes minimum requirements that are designed to help keep occupants safe and healthy. When followed, the requirements help to ensure that buildings:

- are structurally sound, with proper building frames and foundations
- provide adequate fire protection
- address issues concerning radon gas
- provide adequate exits in the event of emergencies
- are equipped with proper plumbing for safe drinking water and liquid waste disposal
- minimize hazards to prevent accidents

All buildings are required to be constructed to the *BC Building Code*. Only buildings in areas with building inspection, however, are subject to the consistent and high level of oversight required, at key points of the construction process, to ensure that the *Code* is met and safety standards are upheld.

# WHY IS A BUILDING INSPECTION SERVICE NEEDED?

The primary purpose of a building inspection service is to protect public health and safety. As noted earlier, local governments provide building inspection to ensure that residential, commercial, industrial and public buildings meet the minimum construction standards set out in the *BC Building Code*.

Building inspection also serves as a tool to implement and promote a community's local planning goals. In Electoral Areas B, E and F, residents have invested considerable time, energy and money into the preparation of Official Community Plans and Zoning Bylaws to promote local planning goals, including goals related to the protection of watercourse riparian areas, and the type and form of community development. Building inspection helps to ensure that new development complies with the Zoning Bylaw regulations and development

permit guidelines in Official Community Plans. Through the building inspection service, projects are reviewed for compliance with local land use regulations at a crucial stage in the development process — namely, before construction occurs. In the absence of building inspection, construction may proceed in ways that are not consistent with policies and regulations and, that undermine local planning goals. Construction without building inspection may also result in buildings being placed in potentially unsafe areas (e.g., hazardous areas or areas prone to flooding). Efforts to enforce compliance after construction is complete are costly and acrimonious for the property owners, the local government, and local taxpayers.

Other reasons the CSRD Board supports the introduction of building inspection are as follows:

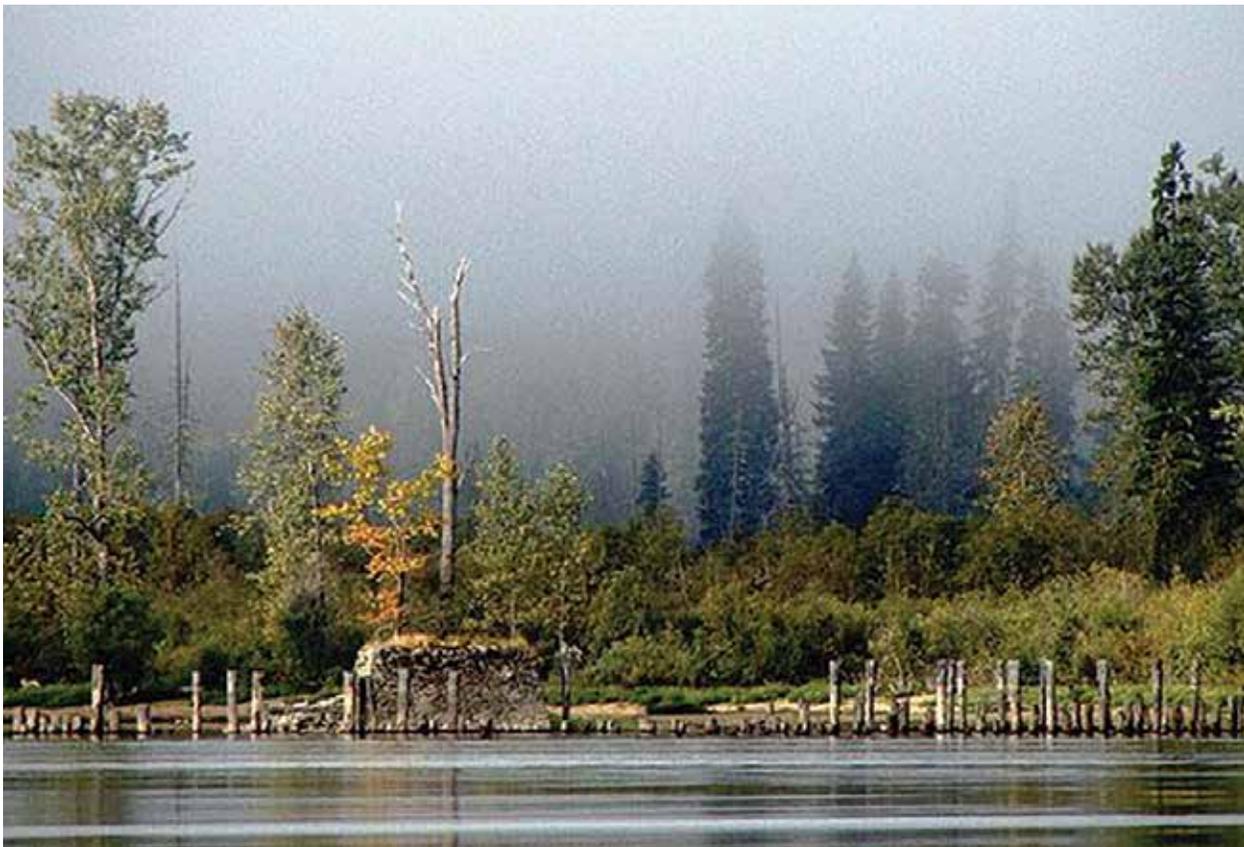
- *Ensures Other Requirements are Completed* — A building inspection service allows local governments to ensure that property owners have obtained all necessary permits and development approvals, including those required by other agencies such as Interior Health, the Ministry of Transportation, and BC Housing.
- *Promotes Equitable Taxation* — BC Assessment uses building permit records to ensure that the assessed value of each property represents that property's true market value. This information provides for an equitable distribution of the property tax burden across all property owners. Without this information, owners who have improved their properties may not be paying their fair share of local taxes.



- *Provides Important Planning Information* — Local governments collect current and historical building data to assist in making development forecasts, formulating planning policies, and preparing infrastructure plans. The information is also accessed and used by a variety of public agencies and individuals.
- *Protects Consumers* — Building permit records provide a level of assurance to homebuyers that construction work has been undertaken in accordance with the standards of the *BC Building Code*. Homeowners who are undertaking renovations can also take comfort in knowing that contractor plans have been reviewed and work inspected for compliance to important health and safety standards contained in the *Code*.
- *Reduces Insurance Costs* — Buildings that have received building permits often qualify for lower insurance premiums. In some case, over

the lifespan of a building, savings from reduced premiums may offset any building permit fees.

As with any new service, there are costs associated with implementing building inspection, as well as new requirements for property owners who undertake building, renovation and construction projects (see costs section below). The benefits of building inspection, however, are widely recognized by local governments and the communities they govern. Every regional district that surrounds the CSRD — indeed, every regional district in southern British Columbia — has a building inspection service. Within the CSRD itself, building inspection is required in every member municipality and, since 2001, in a number of settlement areas in Electoral Area F. Building inspection is not currently provided, however, in any of the remaining electoral areas.



## BUILDING INSPECTION AND THE CSRD

In the CSRD, building inspection exists — and has for some time existed — as an important local government service in every member municipality. In the Regional District's electoral areas, however, the situation is somewhat different.

Building inspection for the electoral areas has been a topic of discussion and some debate in the CSRD since the establishment of the Regional District in 1965. For a brief 18-month period, beginning in 1966, a full building inspection service existed across all Electoral Areas. In 1968, however, the service was repealed and replaced with a more limited version in portions of Electoral Area B and, subsequently, parts of Area E.

Amendments occurred after 1975 to change the number of inspections and cost recovery mechanisms. Other amendments after 1991 expanded the service area to include parts of Area F, then subsequently contracted the area to eliminate the original portions of Areas B and E. By 2001, building inspection in the non-municipal areas of the CSRD applied only to key settlement areas in Area F that continue to be served today.

The current initiative aimed at establishing a full service in Areas B, E and F is a response, in part, to concerns about the consistency of construction quality, and adherence to *BC Building Code* regulations. The initiative also reflects a strong desire on the part of residents and the CSRD to promote local planning goals. In these areas, residents have invested heavily in the preparation of Official Community Plans, Zoning Bylaws and other tools to set out and promote important goals, including those related to the natural environment and community character. Building inspection will help to ensure that new development respects and supports these goals.

The current initiative is limited to Areas B, E and F. It is anticipated, however, that other remaining electoral areas — perhaps all areas — may opt into the service in the coming years.

## WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF A BUILDING INSPECTION SERVICE?

The most immediate costs associated with a building inspection service will apply to property owners who wish to construct a new building, build an addition, or undertake specific types of renovations. With building inspection in place, these owners will need to:

- submit a building permit application and pay the required permit fees
- allow extra time in their project schedule for the permit to be reviewed and issued, and for inspections to be done

These changes will affect all property owners in Electoral Areas B, E and F under the new building inspection service. Property owners in a portion of Area F already have a building inspection service in place; however, this existing service will be expanded to require six (6) inspections at key stages of construction, instead of the three (3) inspections required today. This change will make the existing Area F service consistent with the new service being introduced in Areas B and E.

# HOW WILL THE NEW SERVICE WORK?

The new building inspection service will be provided throughout all of Electoral Areas B, E and F (See Figure 1). Property owners will be required to obtain a building permit before beginning construction of any type of building — single family, multi-family, institutional, industrial, commercial. Certain types of structures will be exempt from this requirement, including:

- accessory buildings that are small in size (under 10m<sup>2</sup>)
- non-structural projects that are modest in value (under \$10,000) and that do not create

- sleeping spaces
- farm buildings
- a variety of other small projects

Building permits will be needed, however, in most cases, including those which involve the:

- construction of a house, townhouse, commercial and industrial building
- construction of accessory buildings, including any structure (e.g., garage) that is larger than 10m<sup>2</sup>, unless otherwise exempted
- demolition of a building
- significant alteration to or repair of an existing building (e.g., structural changes, moving of plumbing systems)
- changes to the use or occupancy of an existing building (e.g., from a garage to a dwelling, or from a residence to a commercial use)
- relocation of a building
- alterations that affect a venting or sewerage system
- installation of a factory-built or manufactured building



Figure 1: Building Inspection Service Area



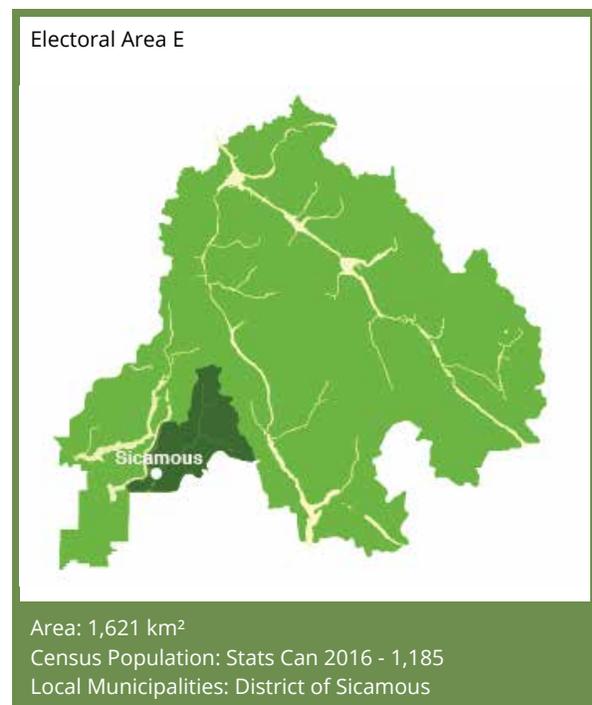
# THE BUILDING PERMIT PROCESS

The process to obtain a building permit will consist of three stages:

- **Application** — To start the process, the property owner will submit an application that details the type of building, alteration or repair, and the value of the proposed work. As part of the application, the owner will need to provide drawings and a site plan, and will be expected to pay the required building permit fee. Other documents may also be required, depending on the type and location of the proposed construction. Such documents may include easements or covenants registered on title, a contaminated site profile, and environmental and/or geotechnical reports.
- **Plan Checking** — The submitted application and plans will be reviewed by CSRD staff for compliance with the *BC Building Code*,

the *CSRD Building Bylaw*, local Zoning Bylaw regulations and development permit guidelines in Official Community Plans. Compliance with other agency approval processes, such as the Interior Health process for on-site sewage disposal, will also be reviewed. Once all checks have been done, and all concerns have been addressed, a building permit (and, if necessary, a plumbing permit) will be issued.

- **Building Inspections** – CSRD building inspectors will conduct a total of six (6) on-site building inspections at key points of the construction process, including at the:
  1. footing construction stage (before concrete)
  2. installation of perimeter drainage pipe and drain rock (prior to backfilling)
  3. installation of building drain, sanitary or storm sewer and plumbing system (prior to backfilling)
  4. framing construction stage (before drywall)
  5. insulation, vapour barrier and air barrier stage
  6. completion of the project



As noted earlier, the existing building inspection service in Area F requires only three (3) inspections. Industry best practices, however, suggest that six (6) is the minimum number needed to ensure adherence to the *BC Building Code*. In most places, including in the municipalities in the CSRD, more than six (6) inspections are required.

At any time in the permit process, building inspectors will be authorized to:

- enter onto properties to ensure compliance with regulations
- require owners to uncover or correct an item
- request further testing to ensure compliance
- issue stop work notices
- revoke permits

Once a building permit is issued, construction will need to begin within six (6) months from the date of issuance. Construction cannot be discontinued or suspended for a period of more than six (6) months, and must be complete within a period of three (3) years. If these conditions are not met, the permit will expire. New permits (and permit fees) would be required to re-start construction.

## WHAT WILL THE SERVICE COST AND WHO WILL PAY?

The new building inspection service is expected to cost about \$370,000 in its first year of operation (2018). More than half of that cost – close to \$200,000 – will be recovered through building permit fees, with the remainder being raised through property taxes on all properties (land and buildings) within Areas B, E, and F.

Cost estimates of the CSRD's service are based upon the costs of the existing building inspection service currently provided to a portion of Area F. The proposed new service includes an additional building inspector and a plan checker to share the increased workload.

Service revenues (permit volumes) are estimated to increase from the current Area F service, given the

increase in area and the number of affected properties. The estimated permit revenue also accounts for the extra number of inspections in the newly proposed service (i.e., six inspections instead of three in the existing service).



# WHAT WILL THE BUILDING PERMIT FEES BE?

The fees for the building and plumbing permits will be consistent with those in place today under the existing Area F inspection service, with adjustments to reflect the additional three inspections proposed for the service. Three types of fees are payable for each application:

- application fee
- permit fee (based on the value of construction)
- special permit fees for specific items such as demolitions, moving a building, a change of occupancy and other cases



## WHAT WOULD THE PERMIT FEES BE FOR A SINGLE FAMILY HOME?

Based on an example of a single family home with a construction value of \$200,000:

- Application fee - \$72
- building permit fee - \$2,033

**TOTAL: \$2,105**

This fee allows for the six required inspections; the additional inspection for a fireplace (if required) would be an extra \$72.

Note, as well, that the CSRD has the ability to credit the application fee to the total building permit fee. In such cases, the total fee for a \$200,000 residence would be \$2,033.

The **application fee** is \$72 for a single-family dwelling, and \$288 for multi-family, commercial, institutional or industrial buildings.

The **permit fee** is a flat fee of \$648, plus:

- \$72 for first \$1,000 of construction value
- \$7.20 for each additional \$1,000 of value, up to \$100,000
- \$6.00 for each additional \$1,000 of value over \$100,000

## HOW WILL THE NEW SERVICE AFFECT MY TAXES?

Ultimately, the tax impacts will depend upon the number and type of building permits in any given year. However, the tax impacts can be estimated based on a projection of building permits for Areas B, E and F. It is estimated that just over half the cost of the service can be recovered through building permit fees. Based

on 2016 assessment values, the resulting tax rate would be 0.078 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The rate amounts to \$15.60 on a property valued at \$200,000. Figure 3 shows the estimated impact on properties of different types and assessed values (land and improvements included).

Property Type	Property Assessment	Tax Rate	Tax Payment
Residential	\$200,000	0.078	\$15.60
	\$250,000	0.078	\$19.50
	\$300,000	0.078	\$23.40
Commercial	\$500,000	0.191	\$95.55
	\$1,000,000	0.191	\$191.10
Industrial	\$1,000,000	0.265	\$265.19

## HOW AND WHEN WILL THE SERVICE BE IMPLEMENTED?

The CSRD will be implementing the building inspection service January 1, 2018. In preparation for this date, the CSRD is undertaking a community engagement process to:

- explain the service
- outline the cost of the service for permit applicants and for taxpayers

as a whole

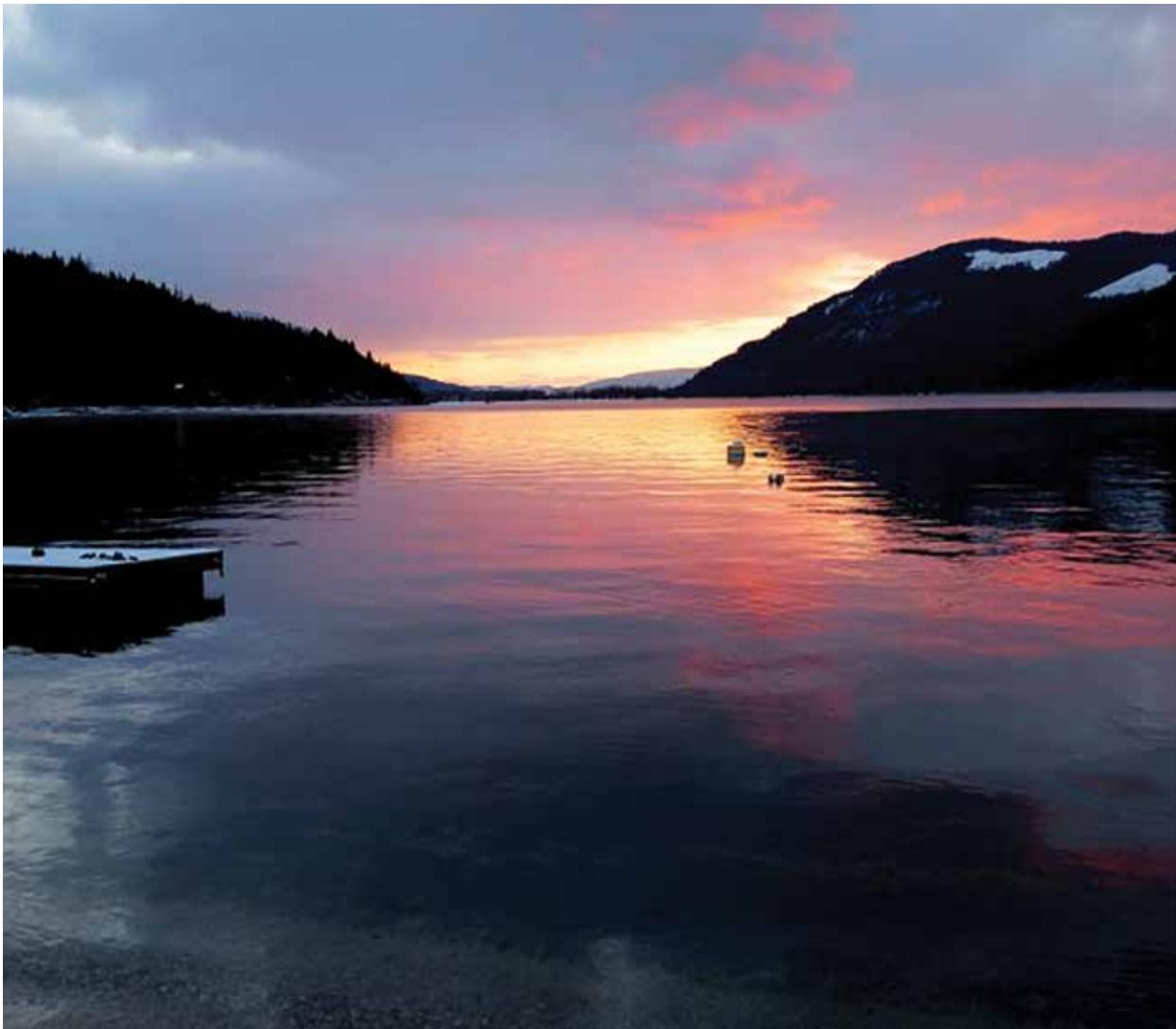
- provide opportunities for stakeholders and the community to ask questions, get answers and express opinions
- detail the process for developing and implementing the service

The engagement process will include Open Houses and meetings with interested stakeholder groups, beginning in June 2017, accompanied by a series of written materials to explain the service. Materials are available online and at the Open Houses. The engagement process will culminate in a report to the CSRD Electoral Area Directors' Committee.

After the community engagement process, the CSRD will prepare a service establishment bylaw and ask the Electoral Area Directors for Areas B, E and F to give consent to the bylaw on behalf of their electors. A referendum on the establishing bylaw is not required because

building inspection is a regulatory service with broad health, safety, environmental and economic benefits that promote the public interest. Following Director assent, the Province's Inspector of Municipalities will be asked to give formal approval.

Once the service establishment bylaw is approved and adopted, the CSRD Board will need to amend the existing *Building Regulation Bylaw No. 630* to include Electoral Areas B, and E and all of Area F, and will need to amend the inspection process and fees to reflect the six inspections.



# TO LEARN MORE

This *Overview* is an information resource to help residents of Electoral Areas B, E and F learn about the CSRD's new Building Inspection Service.

For additional information, go to [www.csrd.bc.ca/services/building-regulationinspection](http://www.csrd.bc.ca/services/building-regulationinspection) and review frequently-asked-questions (FAQ) on the service, as well as a *Building Scenarios* sheet that explains how the service's requirements

will apply to three different types of common construction projects. A *Building Inspection Glossary* is also available, as is a card that residents can complete to provide comments.

The CSRD will be hosting one Open House in each of Electoral Areas B, E and F to provide information and receive comments about the new service. The details are as follows:

## (AREA F)

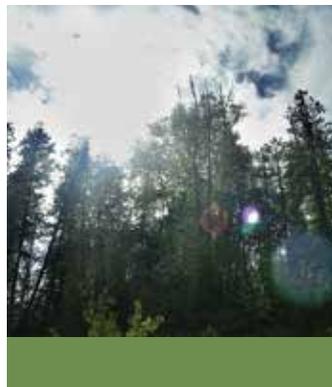
Scotch Creek Fire Hall  
3852 Squilax-Anglemont Hwy  
Monday, June 5, 2017  
4:00 pm to 7:00 pm

## (AREA E)

Sicamous Community Centre  
1121 Eagle Pass Way, Sicamous  
Wednesday, June 7, 2017  
4:00 pm to 7:00 pm

## (AREA B)

Revelstoke Community Centre  
600 Campbell Ave, Revelstoke  
Thursday, June 8, 2017  
4:00 pm to 7:00 pm



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